

NO. 1

25¢



Richard  
Bagley

ESCAPE!

# ESCAPE!

WCZ

"INTO THE WHIRLS OF FANDOM"

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Vol. 1

January, 1961

No. 1

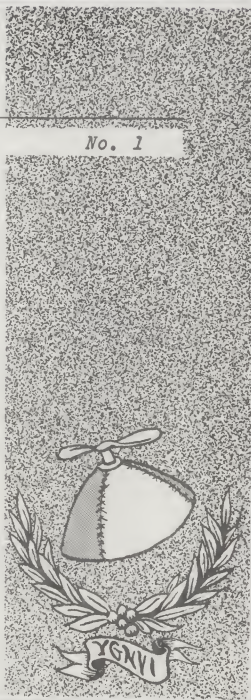
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We hope that within these pages you will be able to capture at least a spark of what is the excitement and magic of Fandom. It is not too often that an amateur fan publication will come along which will contend itself with explorations into the many, many phases of fan interest which go to make up what is the wonderfully, wacky whirl of Fandom; instead, as is all too frequent the case, the editors of the fanzines will devote themselves and their respective fan publishing efforts to exposing just one or sometimes only two of the most popular fan interests, be it "Tarzan" or "Horror". Publications such as these are, of course, fine in their own right and most certainly deserve praise from the fans of the particular subject or topic involved; but, quite needless to say, this leaves many fascinating fields of Fandom coverage unexplored.

Exactly how many fanzines are pubbed each month is unknown, but the total amount must be of huge proportions! In the course of this "mass production" of zines, the greater majority of them fall by the wayside and are forced into the Unholy State of Oblivion. This is an unfortunate circumstance .... especially to the respective editors of these fanzines. Other zines continue for a few more months and then drop out of circulation; or they may enjoy a delightful run of a year or so after which time they enter the Land of Fond Memories. There are very few fan magazines around today which have been in circulation for any more than three years at the most. A select number of these zines, such as YANDRO, are old stand-bys and should, we hope, continue to be with us regularly for many more years to come.

There are, of course, hundreds of reasons why certain fanzines which have the potential of becoming a "stand - by" cease to fill our mail boxes. A lack of printable material is probably only second to a lack of funds for a sufficient enough reason for the editor to drop his zine. But, on the other hand, there are an extremely small number of fanmags which are published quite regularly and sent free of any charge to interested parties. One of the biggest protagonists of this "mad" form of fanzine publishing is Vern Coriell whose BURROUGHS BULLETIN #12 hit an all-time high of 48 pages, all reproduced full-size through photo-offset!

As far as exactly which fan interest is most prevalent in fanzines, we would guess that the "science-fiction/fantasy" zines make up the majority of all published magazines. Possibly the "E.C." addicts take second honors, with third and fourth places going respectively to the "horror" and "Burroughs/Tarzan" fans. After that, it would be a virtual toss - up between all of the other fan interests. This leaves many topics poorly represented in the bulk of the fanzines.

In ESCAPE! we hope to be able to bring you articles of interest to anyone connected with Fandom, be the subject matter "big" or "small". We plan to not only feature stories having to do with E.C., science-fiction (with or without the hyphen), horror movies, or Tarzan; but also to include in the contents of this fanzine reports on the mysteries of a Pogo or a Sherlock Holmes or humor or .....



JIRO TOMIYAMA RUNS GUNS TO THE ARABS

ESCAPE! WATCH



We trust that this type of editorial policy will be met with enthusiasm and encouragement by the readers of this publication. Naturally, we cannot hope to please all of our readers, as there are always a few who, for sinister reasons of their own, will send letters of complaint day after day to us. Crackpots? No ..... we prefer to label them as the fans who took that "One Step Beyond".

We welcome any comments you might like to make about ESCAPE!, from letters of congratulation to letters of suggestions, and even to letters of "I thought that ESCAPE! was nothing but a 'hacked - out' job done on a photo-offset machine". We're trying to please the larger segment of the readers with our ESCAPE! and we hope that you will be sure to write in and tell us where we have failed as far as you are concerned. And if there is anything anyone of you Out There thinks that he or she would like to see in a future issue of this zine, by all means let us know!

Till next time then ...



# THE



# OF FANDOM

When the editors of this fanzine suggested that I write on the subject of Fandom from the viewpoint of why a "fan" stayed on in Fandom, it seemed like it'd be an easy job. After all, I've been active in the Whirl of Fandom for over ten years, and I've published fanzines, written articles and fiction, corresponded; been active in clubs and even on a Worldcon Committee, among other things.

by  
STAN WOOLSTON

But looking deeper into the subject, it appears that it will take quite a few words to cover the apparent contradictions that would be involved if I sought to define the term. In this way it's like science fiction (with or without the hyphen): it's probably impossible to make up a definition that everyone would accept.

The main element of Fandom is, I believe, individuality. Like science fiction, some people are attracted towards Fandom because they "like a story". Undoubtedly, some fans would be as happy with any sort of tale, or perhaps other sorts have become boring to them. Others may be attracted because of the "science" element --- and both science fiction and Fandom can attract people they are interested in this. One of the things that is found so often in fanzines is opinion articles; and so self-expression is but another reason for being active. However, I believe that socializing --- to be part of a group of people with interests similar to one's own --- is the greatest attraction for gaining and retaining the attention of the Fan.

You will note an omission above: I've not mentioned the element of ego-boosting; or just plain "egoboo". This may be very important for the newer fan, but I would say that socializing --- not only with other fans, but with the professionals as well --- is a more fundamental appeal.

Any person is naturally going to try to "get more" out of things which he has found interesting in the past, and so a certain process of growth begins with some of the readers. They may see a letter in a magazine, or an advertisement, and write for a feeling of contact with others or to locate additional reading matter. It doesn't take long for the feeling of companionship to involve him in correspondence and then maybe the whole plenum of fanac --- getting fanzines, writing for them, joining a local or national club



of stf enthusiasts, and in general becoming a part of a growing circle of various fan interests. Projects and conventions widen the number of contacts perhaps, or the publishing bug may bite. What is important is that there are a wide variety of things a fan can do, and it all depends on the individuality of each fan on exactly what he does. Each new contact may suggest another activity, and if the fan develops the ability to make decisions instead of going immediately into all of these things, his interest can be sustained for a long time.

I hinted above that many fans have a certain type of mental outlook. Many seem to be more willing than the average person to look at the world as much more than merely a series of emotional problems that control his life. The idea of adopting the "scientific method" ---- of looking at new ideas and processes as related to a method of finding answers, by looking for causes and testing whether a possible solution will work --- may be included. This is, I'm sure you'll agree, just a few degrees above the idea "sock him in the nose" as the popular way to "solve" a problem. Setting up a theory and then testing it means seeing the universe as more than just chaos, and I believe more fans follow this method than any other people.

Modern life seems closely related to engineering and science, and with someone who is science - oriented it is easier to see changes as logical developments instead of things to be avoided. Yesterday ended last night --- tomorrow starts at midnight.

I've heard that "science fiction is escape stuff" ---- and, if so, then Fandom must also be classified as "escape stuff", too. One of the characteristics of Fandom is that so much real work is done --- many hours of planning a fanzine, in writing for material, often in editing it carefully, adding artwork, and sending it out; corresponding with other fans of mutual interests, club work or committee work, etc. Fandom is noted for its regional conferences and conventions that involve the fans for the most part in many hours of planning for every hour of the meeting. Local organizations involve officers and members in more hours of planning --- in shaping the environment that is enjoyable to the members. This work is practical; it advances a hobby that is as delightful as any other, and like any hobby is an extension of the life of the individuals involved. The fans aren't "escaping" ---- they are making something that wouldn't be theirs without their mental and physical efforts. The same things can be said for every one of the projects that individuals go in for around the country, like bowling; and also for all the national clubs where members work together.

All of this is a friendship-making activity. There is nothing more intelligent than deciding what sort of a person you want to have as your friend, and then going out to find them. Friends are the fillup to life, and finding others with an outlook similar to your own is much more intelligent than just accepting whoever comes along even when their interests bore you. So while Fandom is not a substitute for other people, to me it is a handy reservoir where I store some of my best friends.

Before I could make any statements about what area of Fandom is most apt to sustain their interest over a period of time I would have to do some research, or run a poll on the subject. But I believe that a poll would indicate that sociability and "interest in fannish things" are high on the list. By 'fannish things' I mean interest in things fan do at meetings or when they get together, in person or by mail. The bull-session and the group letter are one phase of this; writing for a fanzine ---- perhaps a letterzine even --- has much the same flavor as this, and to me is one of the basic appeals of Fandom. It is something like a personal letter, and I believe that when entering Fandom a person should be encouraged to write "personal essays" that bring out personal opinions on various themes as a way to develop ability to express himself. The well - researched article is much rarer and takes more time, so the article of opinion is more common. But if a newcomer wanted to make an impression in a hurry, the researched type of piece

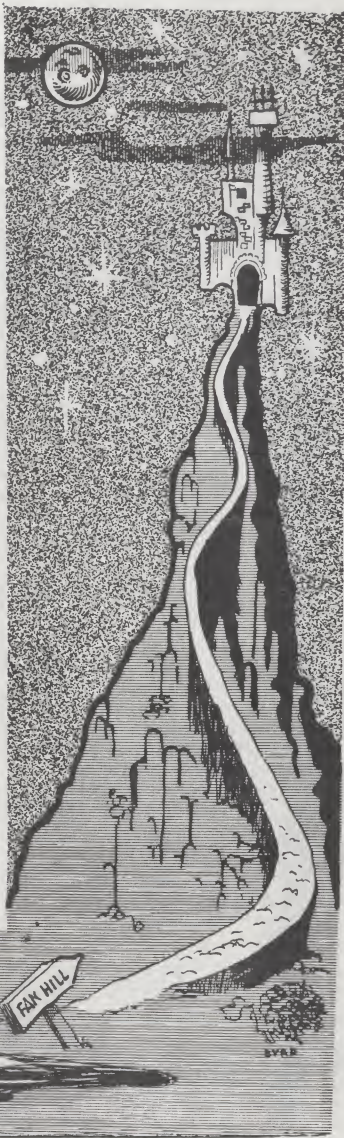
There are usually a few fans who specialize in writing articles, or write articles so often that it seems unlikely that they also correspond as much as they do. If more fans would write regularly, it is possible that these few fans wouldn't wear themselves out and drop out of fanac. So if any fan wants to help save his favorite article - writer, he might start writing his own frequently.

Anything leading to "new beginnings" should lengthen fan-lives by providing an injection of enthusiasm when things become too commonplace. The fresh outlook that an interested newcomer can bring is one of the reasons that there are many fans who are missionaries, seeking out newcomers and setting them on the Road to Fanac. A few years ago Jean Linard started to liven fanzines with his own way of expressing things. Young men such as the Ellick-Carr combination that started FANAC as a fresh source of news brought an entirely different personality to enrich the fan-world, and there are many others who have emerged or are in the Process right now. It is for these type of people that many fans stay around; it is for this that newcomers are encouraged, fan-zines are scanned, fanclubs attended. Whether it is art-shows or a Fellowship of the Ring, each new combination of fan and new idea adds to the interest of Fandom ---- and these things make clubs (both local and national) a continual challenge.

Newcomers usually have to develop before they do their best. They may have to decide what line of Approach they wish to emphasize now, but one thing is sure: they will find Fandom more rewarding, and Fandom will find them more interesting, if they sit down and think about their interests, and then develop it as only they can.

Newcomers and old stand-bys, by working together when they can, and by thinking about their own activities, can plan for themselves a better and more sustained Fanlife. Maybe they can even last forever.

I hope some of them do ...







*- Presented to*

MORT WEISINGER  
JULIUS SCHWARTZ  
ALLEN GLASSER  
FORREST J. ACKERMAN

*... for Heroism and Bravery Beyond the Call of Duty*

*In the ancient year of 1932, these four noteworthy and stalwart Fans embarked upon an explosive Adventure, the reverberations of which are still being felt today. For it was in this year that our four enthusiastic and let's -look-to-the-future-of-this-furshluggtner-mess friends published the first true Science Fiction Fanzine --- THE TIME TRAVELLER*

*Fans are still shaking in their Beantes.*



**MERIT**

ESCAPE  
MAGAZINE



# WHY

## STF WRITERS GO NUTS

by  
JACK COBURN

From the Year 12 (1938) comes the following, which originally appeared in IMAGINATION, the fannish forerunner of the prozine. We feel that even today this article is a timely and interesting piece ...

1 January, 1960

Mr John W. Campinger  
Editor, AWEFUL STORIES

Dear Mr Campinger:

I am submitting herewith a manuscript, "Putrid Planet".  
Hope that you like it.

Sincerely yours,

*Ernest Awther*

Ernest Awther

30 January, 1960

Dear Mr Awther:

I have read "Putrid Planet" with interest but regret it doesn't come down to the standard of AWEFUL STORIES. However, it has a good idea and if you wish to rewrite it we shall be glad to consider it again.

Cordially,

14 February, 1960

*John W. Campinger*  
JOHN W. CAMPINGER

Dear Mr Campinger:

I am returning "Putrid Planet", having rewritten it to the best of my ability.

Sincerely yours,

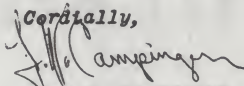
*Ernest Awther*

Ernest Awther

28 February, 1960

Dear Mr Author:

"Putrid Planet" is much improved but still has a kink or two. For one thing, the idea of enzymic-isotopic symbiosis needs a little more explanation, as our office physicist went violently insane after attempting to check your figures. Moreover, your hero has a beard and in *AWFUL STORIES* the hero is always clean-shaven. I feel sure that you will be able to make the story acceptable.


Cordially,  
  
JOHN W. CAMPINGER

12 March, 1960

Dear Mr Campinger:

Here is "Putrid Planet" back with the changes you suggested.

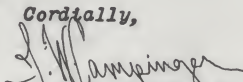
Sincerely yours,

  
Ernest Aurther

25 March, 1960

Dear Mr Author:

We shall be glad to accept "Putrid Planet" at 1/3¢ per word payment upon publication. Incidentally, the script has somehow been mislaid in this office --- can you send us the carbon copy?


Cordially,  
  
JOHN W. CAMPINGER

3 April, 1960

Dear Mr C:

Thanks for the acceptance and here is the carbon.

Sincerely yours,

  
Ernest Aurther

17 April, 1960

Dear Mr Awther:

Due to a reorganization, Mr Campinger is no longer the editor of *AWFUL STORIES* but instead now edits *40 GUN WESTERN*. Our requirements also have been altered and I regret I cannot find "Putrid Planet" acceptable. All of our heroes now have beards and we require love interest. I hope you can fix your story to fit our new policy.

Truly,

29 April, 1960

*WFW*

Dear Mr Weisbell:

WFWeisbell

I have rewritten "Putrid Planet" again. Here it is.

Sincerely yours,

*Ernest Awther*

Ernest Awther

22 May, 1960

Dear Mr Awther:

We are glad to accept "Putrid Planet". We now pay 1/10¢ on publication.

Truly,

*WFW*

WFWeisbell

30 May, 1960

Dear Mr Weisbell:

OK.

Sincerely yours,

*Ernest Awther*

Ernest Awther

18 July, 1960

Dear Mr Awther:

A new development: we are now contemplating publishing a quarterly. "Putrid Planet" is the type tale we need for the new venture so we are holding it; this note to explain delay in appearance. Vol 1 No 1 is skeded for Winter.

Truly,

*WFW*

WFWeisbell



23 July, 1960

Dear Mr W:

Whatever you think best.

Sincerely yours,

*Ernest Awther*

Ernest Awther

13 November, 1960

Dear Mr Awther:

Quarterly plans fell thru but you will find "Putrid Planet" finally published in our Annual. Congratulations! Check enclosed ...

Truly,

*WFW*

WFWeissbell

20 November, 1960

Dear Weissbell:

Your check bounced! What's up???

Sincerely yours,

*Ernest Awther*

Ernest Awther

2 January, 1961

Dear Mr Awther:

We regret to inform you that AWFUL STORIES is no longer being published. The company is at present attempting to meet its debts promptly as possible and you may expect your check to be made good within 36-37 months at the most.

Sincerely,

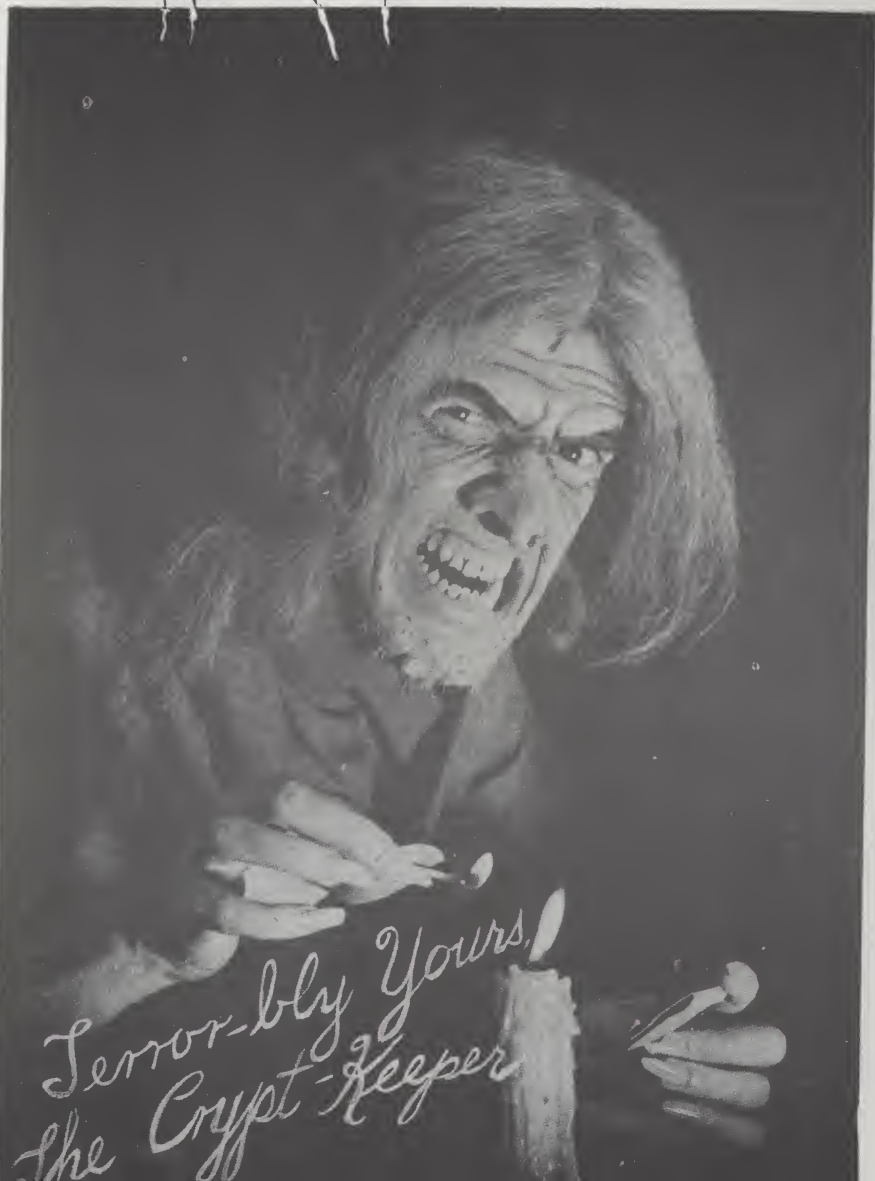
*WvW*

Warner van Wollheim,  
ATTORNEY AT LAW

FOR THE **EC** FEN: A SPECIAL ..... **BONUS!**

the *Crypt-keeper!*

NEXT ISSUE,  
...THE OLD WITCH!





# FROM FANDOM

# TO INFINITY



## *Key To Photos -*

1) Ackerman the Incredible; 2) Workroom --- books, books, books; 3) Gateway to the Whirl of Science-fiction; 4) Elongated photo; 5) One Step Beyond --- into books, books, books; 6) Other corner of workroom in which we find more books, books, books; 7) Dining room --- you guessed it; more books!





WITH FORREST J. ACKERMAN

by  
*Ron Haydock*

Inside this house is a world. Not the ordinary, everyday world of skyscrapers housing far too many people, or of automobiles with their impatient drivers, or of homes with the smell of the evening meal being prepared; this is the world where Tars Tarkas is at this very moment absorbed in conversation with John Carter, where somewhere on another planet deep in outer space a lone survivor is fighting courageously to stay alive, where beautiful handmaidens are clutched powerlessly in the evil grasp of the mad king Ming of Mongo. It is the world of Science Fiction and Fantasy, and the world of its proprietor and Overseer ... Forrest J. Ackerman, fan.



FORRY LOOKS TO THE FUTURE—'39

The history of this world is the story of a man; a man who has dedicated himself to the Whirl of Science Fiction Fandom. Author, publisher, editor, agent, correspondent, collector; he has been all of these (and more) at one time or another in his life. If we were to travel back into time to the date of October, 1926, and if we were to search for a nine-year old boy named Forrest Ackerman, we would probably come upon a thin, sandy-haired boy who was eagerly reading his copy of AMAZING STORIES. Although the first issue of that magazine hit the

newsstands in April of 1926, it wasn't until a few months afterward that Forry learned about it. It was during this time when he was first becoming aware of the life which evolved around him; from the people of his town to pictures he had seen of the elephants or of the lions. The theme of existence fascinated him greatly and was truly awakened when he came across a piece of art by Frank R. Paul depicting a creature which was unlike anything in the world

around him. From this beginning he went on to read exciting stories about various imaginary civilizations featured in the science fiction magazines. His interest grew, and grew, and grew; until one day he found himself sitting in the midst of some 30-odd fantasy publications. He discovered that like himself there were others who were interested in this theme of existence and what might happen to the world if certain events were to occur. During the later years he got into contact with these "fans" and was soon in the delightfully, happy state of Fandom. Any money with which he came into contact went right back into the buying of all of the science fiction magazines he could lay his eager hands on. Sometime in 1930, he discovered that at that time there were some 40 different copies of these magazines which he didn't have in his collection and he thought that he would never be able to collect them all. Times were hard, as the country was deep in depression and his parents were somewhat against his constantly asking for money to go out and buy the magazines he wanted so much. Nevertheless, he was somehow able to buy at least some of them.

In 1932, three of his friends and he got together to publish the first fanzine, THE TIME TRAVELLER. This, needless to say, is a historical marker in Fandom. From that year until the day when he entered the Armed Forces at the beginning of World War 2, Forrest collected and read as many sci-fi magazines and books as he could possibly get hold of. In the army, he turned to editing the post newspaper almost single-handedly. Out of the 2,000 army newspapers published, his was voted into the second place position; quite remarkable a feat!

As he was working on the paper, he was able to leave the base on Thursday nights to check the proofs on the paper. Perhaps no one at the base realized that Forrest was not only proofreading on those nights, but that he was also attending the weekly Thursday night meetings of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society (LASFS).

After the war was over and he had been discharged, Forry decided that it was time he sat down to make plans for the future. Many years ago he told himself that he wanted to be nothing but a full-time fan for the rest of his life. In his army days, he came into contact with quite a few science fiction editors and writers, and realizing that he stood out in the use of English and grammar, he decided to try his hand at agenting.

In 1946, Forrest Ackerman became a science fiction agent. In the first year of being an agent he made \$1,075. During the course of that year, he had spent \$1,025 on submitting manuscripts to the editors, so he wound up with a fat \$50 for his first year's work. He continued to be an agent for some years afterward, and it wasn't until just recently that he had "dropped" most of his clients and is now only handling a few very close friends. He sold quite a few of his own fiction stories and began to do various columns for sci-fi magazines. All of this time, however, his collection of books and magazines was growing by leaps and bounds. The only convention he had missed in all this time was the one which was held in 1946 at Los Angeles, his hometown. As a matter of fact, he both missed it and didn't miss it. He was there for the first day only, after which time he took sick and had to be rushed home and into bed. He had worked so hard on the convention that when it came time to see his labors and hopes actually realized, he was in a state of semi-collapse.

Forrest moved all of his 'world' of books and trophies and magazines into his present house in 1951. This, to say the least, was no easy project; as Forry himself says:

"I had lived across town in an eight room apartment for about 16 years before I moved here. Fans came over every Saturday and Sunday, armed with egg crates and apple boxes and empty orange boxes; and I kind of played straw boss and showed them what I wanted packed and where and how and so on. Every hour on the hour, I had kind of Pyramid of Giveaways. As I went packing up my whole 'world', I ran across all sorts of things I decided I could live without ---- extra fanzines, prozines, books, and so forth. I put them on one table and, say, after everybody had worked for an hour, we would call a halt for five minutes and we would have a mad scramble while they ran over and grabbed off something for themselves.

"Finally, when the fatal moving day came, it was a Sunday. I had a policeman friend at that time who was able to rent a two - ton truck; and 13 fans, I think, came over very early in the morning to my old place. We loaded that truck to overflow! Actually, it must've been 3000 pounds on it. We came over here (to the new house) and emptied it once, went back across town, did it all over again; and by the time the truck was unloaded for the second time, it was nine o'clock in the evening and most everybody had to go to work the next morning. They had all worked like Trojan slaves and were ready to drop in their tracks when I was ready to take everybody over here to what we call "restaurant row", about three blocks away, and feed the hungry slaves; but I got off easy. There was nobody that was even in the mood for food. They just wanted to go home and drop in the bathtub or their bed and be dead.

"They hadn't quite completed the job so I had to go out and rent a trailer and went back and forth for a couple of days on my own, getting the last dragged out



"TARZAN ON MARS" SYNOPSIS



of the old establishment; and then I thought I was going to turn into the "Hunchback of Notre Dame" because it seemed to me that the work went on and on and on ---- that there was just no end to my walking into the house with boxes and putting them on the floor. There was a great joy, though, to watch the library grow and to get the books up there on the shelves, but I thought that I was going to have a permanently crooked back".

Forrest estimates that his entire collection now borders near the figure of 25,000 pieces, valued at somewhere around \$150,000!!! In addition to the collection he has in his home, there is a "small" overflow of three garages filled with assorted goodies. He believes that his is the largest collection of science fiction books, magazines, trophies, movie stills, manuscripts, fanzines, and artwork in existence today.



DESK?

Among some of the "unusual" pieces in his collection is the original manuscript of Ray Bradbury's FAHRENHEIT 451; the complete synopsis of a book which although it was never published, caused quite a bit of commotion a few years back: Stu Byrne's TARZAN ON MARS; a paper - weight in the form of one of the Martian flying machines from WAR OF THE WORLDS which he was given as a Christmas gift from George Pal; original paintings and artwork by such people as Virgil Finlay, Hannes Bok, and Albert Neutzell; a head-mask which was worn by the monsters in the science fiction film INVASION OF THE SAUCERMEN; many hundreds and hundreds of books from foreign countries; various "space toys", such as Robby the Robot and flying saucers (all with flashing lights); and ---- well, you name it; if Forry doesn't have it, you don't need it!

He does draw the line, though, when it comes to exactly what his collection should consist of. He has little desire to collect forms of sci-fi which drift back to olden times, even as far back as to the stone age. Although he wouldn't mind having a stone tablet upon which is inscribed some early cave man science fiction, Forry has made no real attempts to obtain same. He believes however that he has not missed adding a book or a magazine to his collection since he first started collecting SF back in 1926. This, in itself, is quite remarkable!

Forrest has made some very definite plans to the effect of what will happen to his monstrous collection when the Grim Reaper knocks on his door. Each year, before hopping aboard a plane which will carry him to the convention city, he takes out as much life insurance as he is able to. In the event the plane "falls from the sky" (as he puts it) the insurance money is to be divided according to the terms he has set forth in his last will and testament. A very sizable amount of the money will be bequeathed to about dozen close friends of his; another portion will be left to the Transatlantic Fan Fund. This will allow TAFF to bring over a foreign fan each year at convention time for the next 25 years. The science fiction club over which he presides every Thursday night in Los Angeles will be left a certain amount of money for which they will finally be able to build a permanent club house. Ever since LASFS was first organized some 27 years ago, the club has never had a place that they can call their own. They have generally been holding meetings in a private residence; but Forrest believes that the gang should have a building of their own. So he has set aside a sizable amount of money to go towards the completion of that dream.

One-third of the insurance money (\$100,000) will go towards the construction of a museum on the property upon which his present home is located. The entire collection would be put into storage while the house was completely knocked down. Every square inch of the property would be used for Forry's museum-library. On the second (top) floor will be located living quarters for the residents, a room designed especially for parties, and even living quarters for fan guests.

The problem of exactly who should be in charge of the museum has been thoughtfully considered. Ackerman has made a list of about one dozen fans who have been quite active in Fandom for many, many years; and the name at the top of the sheet will become the heir of the museum. The occupants would simply have to move into the place and to keep it up ... which includes adding new books and magazines and other things as soon as they are on the market. The only cost to the proprietors would be the annual property tax; but, here again, Forrest has taken care of this. A sum of money has been set aside to cover the expenses of the taxes for many years to come. Of course there would be a legal agreement stating that the occupants (heirs) could not sell or use the place for anything other than that for which it was intended.

If in the event that Ackerman does not "fall from the sky", things will still be much the same; he has left all of his insurance money to Fandom. One of the projects which would not come through, though, would be the construction of the museum. The house would stand as it does today, but would be "owned" by the heirs to the place.

Whether in Life or Death, Forrest J. Ackerman is an integral organ of Fandom, a fan to the End ... and Afterwards. His love of science fiction in all of its diversified forms is evident from the minute you step into his home. His home is the Fan's home. His world, strange and unusual it's true it may seem to the ordinary person, is a living example of devotion to a Way of Life. Ray Bradbury summed up Forry's life as "one of the very few people I know who has turned a hobby into a manner of existence".

We wonder if when Forrest J. Ackerman passes on to his Great Reward that he will not simply become a soul confined to his "world in a house" in spirit form. After all ... is this not Heaven?

*Finis*

FORRY FENDS OFF  
FIENDISH FAN





## A CASE OF IDENTITY

- H. W. Starr

There is, in the Sacred Writings of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, a question of identification, which to the best of my belief, has been neglected by the students of the Canon. This is the peculiar problem of John Clayton. To solve it we must begin by examining the brief career of a certain English nobleman who himself does not appear in any of Dr. Watson's cases, although other publications of his son of the same name have caused much attention. The only published account of his life, by an American author, appeared shortly before the First World War. It is, according to the writer, based upon family diaries and official records then in the possession of the British Colonial Office.

This nobleman is John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, but the author adds that this designation is not quite the correct one, a point which will be discussed later. Greystoke is described as "above the average height .... his carriage that of a perfect, robust health; influenced by his years of army training. Political ambition had caused him to seek transference from the army to the Colonial Office". He seems to have been almost immediately "commissioned to make a peculiarly delicate investigation of conditions in a British west coast African colony from whose simple native inhabitants another European power was known to be recruiting soldiers for its native army, which it solely used for the collection of rubber and ivory from the savage tribes along the Congo and the Aruwimi". In May, 1888, he sailed with his wife, formerly the Honourable Alice Rutherford, from Dover. Since they had been married some three months, their wedding obviously took place in early 1888. In June they arrived in Freetown and chartered a small sailing vessel, the 'Fuwalda', which was to take them upon the last leg of their journey.

For some twenty years this was the last heard of the Greystokes, the vessel, and its crew. However, the Colonial Office documents we have mentioned reveal that the crew of the 'Fuwalda' mutinied, murdered its officers, and marooned Lord and Lady Greystoke upon the west coast of Africa at approximately 10° south latitude. The Lady Alice was pregnant at the time, and a son was born, either late in 1888 or in early 1889. The boy was named John, after his father --- and this is significant, for a later account of the Greystokes published in 1917 reveals that when, many years afterward, this son became a father, he too named the oldest child John. A still more recent account mentions the fact that this child also, when he had reached maturity and married, named his son John. Hence we have a reliable record of four generations of male Claytons, each named John. The conclusion is inescapable: John was the name invariably given to the oldest



Clayton son, and the probabilities are overwhelming that the father of the marooned Lord Greystoke bore the name John Clayton.

There is one more fact which is of major importance. The Greystoke documents make it clear that John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, had a younger brother who succeeded to the title after John's disappearance. This younger brother had a son, William Cecil Clayton, who in 1909 was in the neighborhood of nineteen or twenty years of age.

It should be mentioned here that in the second of the Greystoke publications there appears a passage which connects the fortunes of this family with the Canon, and which leads to the suspicion that the American author was not wholly unaware of the connection:

"Herr Skopf ... was baffled. He had never heard of Sherlock Holmes or he would have lost no time in invoking the aid of that celebrated sleuth, for here was a real mystery ..."

If our curiosity is aroused by this puzzling little passage and we leaf through the consecrated pages of Watson in search of a similar name to Greystoke, we of course stumble across "... the case ... of the Abbey School, in which the Duke of Greyminster was so deeply involved" (THE ADVENTURE OF THE BLANCHED SOLDIER). The passage is recognized by all Sherlockians as a reference to THE ADVENTURE OF THE PRIORY SCHOOL. Now we know that when necessary Watson could be most discreet, and there were few of Holmes's cases that required more discretion than the kidnapping of Lord Saltire, heir to the Duke of Holdernessee.

Undoubtedly the first precaution that was taken was the substitution of fictitious titles for the ones actually borne by the duke and his son. We should note that the family name of the duke is never mentioned. However, THE ADVENTURE OF THE BLANCHED SOLDIER is one of the two related by Holmes himself, and here, through either carelessness or indifference, he has let slip the correct title --- Greyminster.

Another significant point is that the American who wrote up the misfortunes of John Clayton made at least a cursory attempt to obscure the identity of the nobleman. We may be certain that the names "John Clayton" and "Alice Rutherford" are authentic. Even a glance into Burke's PEERAGE or LANDED GENTRY will show us that the Claytons and Rutherfords are distinguished British families. Obviously no man in his right mind would try to disguise the identity of a nobleman by giving him the name of a different but equally prominent family. The writer would naturally manufacture a name which was not listed by Burke. Like most Americans, he thought of members of peerage in terms of their titles. The family name of a nobleman seldom occurs to us. Hence it would seem sufficient to the author to alter the title alone. The oldest son of a duke is commonly known as Lord Blank, but the "Blank" is not the proper noun that appears in the title of the duke; the son of the Duke of Holdernessee, for example, is Lord Saltire, not Lord Holdernessee. Thus the narrator of the Greystoke material very probably substituted a fictitious title derived from the first syllable of the title borne by Clayton's father. Clayton's real title was possibly some such designation as "Lord Stoke Poges" ----- although I shall not insist upon the validity of this specific example.

As our next step, let us examine in THE ADVENTURE OF THE PRIORY SCHOOL the brief sketch of the Duke of Holdernessee --- for to avoid confusion we shall continue to refer to him by that title. He is described as the sixth duke; as being since 1900 the Lord Lieutenant of Hallamshire (an imaginary country; the name is that of an ancient lordship and has not had any official use in recent years --- what careful, though futile, precautions Watson took to hide the identity of this great man!); and as the father of an only child, Arthur, Lord Saltire, whose mother he married in 1888. These details are portentous. Holdernessee of



course could not have been John Clayton, for Lord and Lady "Greystoke" did not survive to return to England; but it is very likely indeed that he is the younger brother of John Clayton. (Incidentally, both brothers were married in 1888, perhaps in a double wedding) Nor do we have to seek very far for evidence of this identification. The younger brother of Clayton not only succeeded to the title, but also had a son, William Cecil, whose age corresponds very closely to that of Lord Saltire. This seems too close a correspondence of facts to be mere coincidence.

Since we have formed this hypothesis, we must seek in the Canon itself for a link which may act as confirmation. Is there, for example, any reference to John Clayton? There is. In *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* the driver of the cab in which Stapleton trails Sir Henry and Dr. Mortimer is John Clayton; of 3, Turpey Street, the Borough. If this man belonged to the Greyminster family, he must have been an elder son, for he bears the name of John, which we have already established as being traditionally reserved for the first son. But he appears at 221B in 1889 and remarks that he has been driving a cab for seven years. Consequently, it is impossible for him to be either "Greystoke" or "Holderness". Indeed, if he is connected with this family, there is only one person he can possibly be ---- the fifth Duke of Greyminster, father of the two Clayton brothers. He of course must have died before Holmes encountered his son, for *THE ADVENTURE OF THE PRIORY SCHOOL* occurred during or between the years 1900-1903, and by that time the young son had inherited the title.

There are a few minor details which would tend to confirm our identification. The only description Watson gives of the cab driver's appearance is "a rough-looking fellow". This is not a term that would ordinarily be applied to a small and insignificant man. Therefore, the cabman was probably fairly tall and muscular. Here we should pause to note evidence of a family resemblance. The father of Lord Saltire is described as "tall and stately"; and "Lord Greystoke", like most of the males of his line, we know was robust and above the average height.

Another curious detail should be observed. In his conversation, the cabman does employ the words 'gent' and 'toff'; but his language, although far from Chesterfieldian, is by no means the illiterate speech we should expect from a London cab driver of the eighties.

There are, admittedly, rather slight grounds on which to base our assumption, although their cumulative weight is considerable. Unfortunately, they do not answer the obvious objection to our theory. Why should the fifth Duke of Greyminster spend seven years working as a London cabbie? It cannot be denied that --- until recent emergence of the welfare state --- few members of the British peerage have taken up the profession of cab driver. But this obstacle is not as insurmountable as one might think. Let us consider the probable age of John Clayton in conjunction with certain developments that took place in Victorian England.

If "Lord Greystoke", when he sailed from Dover in 1888, was still a young man ---- about twenty-four or -five, let us say ---- the approximate date of his birth was 1864; and we may reasonably assume that his father was a young, and possibly enthusiastic, man at that time. The year is 1864 and an important date in social history, for it was then in London itself, that the first International Workingmen's Association was founded by Karl Marx. And only three years later Marx published *DAS KAPITAL*. Think of the impact of these events upon a young and enthusiastically idealistic aristocrat!

There was indeed a strong and aggressive social consciousness among many of the British intellectuals during the following years. In the 1880's, for example ---- the years during which Clayton took up cab driving ---- innumerable socialistic pamphlets poured from the pens of William Morris and his fellow radicals. All of these must have made a marked impression upon Clayton. But what could a British nobleman do to further the cause? He could not sell his vast estates and devote the proceeds to the advance of



Socialism or Communism, for the estates were entailed. There was one thing, however, he could do: he could abandon his enormous wealth and live solely upon his own earnings as one of the underprivileged masses --- a significant gesture! Unquestionably John Clayton was one of the forgotten pioneers of social enlightenment; one of those enthusiasts who carry the principles of class equality to such an extreme that they refuse to live in, perhaps even to acknowledge, the class to which their birth entitles them. And in passing we might note that this rebellion against the mores of society was very likely inherited by his famous grandson John Clayton III, who, as the reader is doubtless aware, is well known for his frequently expressed contempt for the petty conventions, hypocrisy, and pusillanimity of our effete twentieth century civilization.

It is an axiom of scholarship that "a hypothesis has met its supreme test when it solves not only the problem which it was designed to cover, but also the cognate problems that arise during further investigation". Let us see what cognate problems our hypothesis has solved.

In the first place, many readers have been rather startled by the irritable and belligerent attitude of the cab driver. Until Holmes soothes his ruffled feelings, his manner is far from that which we should expect a cabby to adopt in the presence of so august a figure as the Master. Yet this attitude is in no way unusual if our hypothesis is accepted. First, the fifth Duke would certainly not be humble, and ---- most important of all ---- in 1889 he must have been tortured by anxiety. His charming daughter-in-law and his older son, the handsome and promising "Greystoke", by far the more attractive of the two brothers, had both apparently vanished from the face of the earth. Under such circumstances, patience, and coalition would be the last thing we could expect from this man.

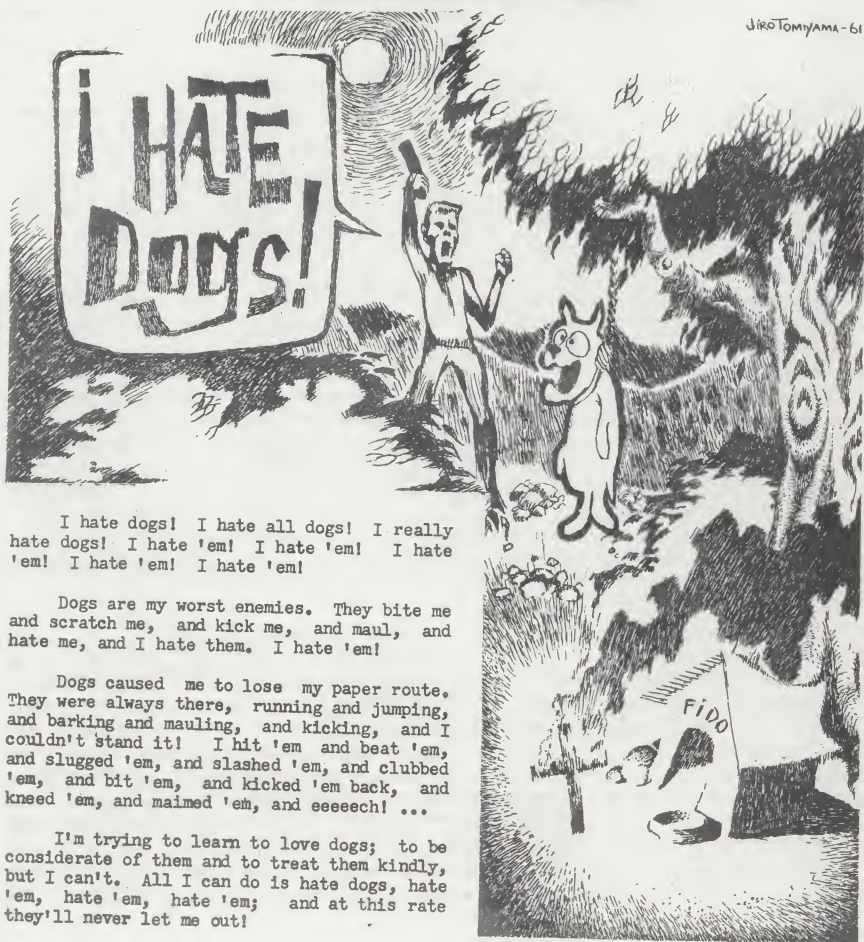
Our second problem is just as satisfactorily disposed of. The abnormal dread of publicity on the part of the "Duke of Holderness" in particular and the Greyminster family in general is a little hard to explain: for example, why this reluctance to acknowledge openly the real story behind the disappearance of the "Greystokes"? "Holderness", we know, had an illegitimate child, James Wilder; he had been separated from his wife; his heir had been kidnapped, and an innocent man murdered in the course of the crime. These facts related by Watson are embarrassing enough, but they do not quite account for the Greyminster sensitivity. Let us, however, look at the picture we have uncovered. The fifth Duke had blossomed forth a rampant Socialist or Communist, had turned his back upon his own class, and had become a cab driver. Probably he had hideously humiliated his snobbish younger son by turning up at the double wedding of 1888 ---- one of the great social events of the season ---- dressed in a hackman's outfit and preaching inflammatory communistic doctrines in the lingo he had acquired during six years of cab driving and more than twenty years of radical political activities. Is it any wonder that the Greyminster family exerted pressure on the British Colonial Office not to publicize even the "Greystoke" mishap?

A third question to which our hypothesis provides an answer is that raised by THE ADVENTURE OF THE EMPTY HOUSE. Here Holmes informs Watson that during the period of his supposed death (1891-1894) he "paid a short but interesting visit to Khalifa at Khartoum". Of course all Sherlockians are aware that during this time Khalifa was not at Khartoum; so why did Holmes lie? We must remember that after the Reichenbach episode there was only one person who was aware both of Holmes's survival and of his hiding place. That person was Mycroft ---- and of Mycroft, Holmes said "... occasionally he is the British government". When "Lord Greystoke" who was to make "a peculiarly delicate investigation" disappeared, the Colonial Office would naturally feel it necessary to call in a master of "delicate investigations" to find the vanished nobleman. Doubtless Mycroft as a last resort called upon his brother. However, after so many years even the great Sherlock could not possibly discover the whereabouts of the "Greystokes"; and this is very likely the reason that Holmes ---- never the most modest of men and rather sensitive about his few failures ---- was reluctant to explain to Watson the real reason for his presence in Africa



When a problem is as simple and straightforward as this one, a summary seems scarcely necessary; but in conclusion I think we may safely say that the hypothesis with which we began has justified itself, and that it had led to these sound conclusions: (1) that John Clayton, cab driver, is John Clayton, fifth Duke of Greyminster, father of the "sixth Duke of Holderness" and of John Clayton, "Lord Greystoke"; and (2) that the kidnapped "Lord Saltire" is William Cecil Clayton, first cousin of John Clayton III, "Lord Greystoke", seventh Duke of Greyminster --- popularly known as TARZAN OF THE APES.

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began reading science-fiction way back in 1916 when I first discovered John Carter and the figments of Ray Cummings's imagination which appeared in ARGOSY and in some of the "science" magazines of the early twenties. Being something of an introvert, I never wrote a letter to the editor save on one occasion. It wasn't published so that was the last letter I wrote to a prozine until after I joined Fandom.

All through the thirties and forties I wished that there were clubs in my own area where I could contact other science-fiction enthusiasts. And to this day it gripes me to learn that all the time there was an active fan club which met in Newark, New Jersey, only a few miles from my house. I had never heard of the club until late in the fifties and then I contacted them through the Philadelphia convention.

Even now I wonder just how many thousands of people there are reading the prozines like myself who have had no opportunity to contact fandom in any way. It's true that I had read about fansines, but after I had sent money to one of them and after never even getting an answer in return, I figured that they just weren't responsible. I certainly didn't want to subscribe for a year to something which might fold tomorrow! And, I suspect, that that is the attitude of the majority of stf readers who come across mention of fansines in the pro mags.

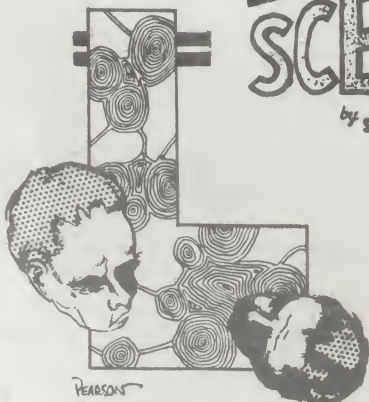
So when I heard about the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F) from Coslet in a personal letter, I immediately joined the club. By this time I had already been a member of the International Science Fiction Correspondents Clubs (ISFCC) and the Eastern Science Fiction Association (ESFA). However, one of the first things I thought of after joining N3F was how about having the club start a Fanzine Clearing House where a person could send a dollar and receive a bundle of fansines in return, thus giving him a chance to pick and choose exactly which fansines he wished to subscribe to.

Well, Ralph Holland (president of N3F) liked the idea and suggested that I take it over as an N3F activity. He gave me the necessary credentials and off I went canvassing the New York pro-editors in an attempt to get mention of the Fanzine Clearing House (FCH) in the prozines so as to contact those people who have never been connected with fandom.

Outside of Lowndes, there wasn't a single pro-editor who published one word about FCH. All of them suggested that I write a letter which they could publish in the letters section of their respective magazines. And all of them received just such letters; not only that, but I managed to persuade a couple of dozen correspondents to also send letters to the editors, commenting on the magazine and mentioning the FCH in the letter. Without exception, all mention of the FCH was deleted from the letters even

# FAN SCENE

by SETH JOHNSON





though some of them were published.

I brought this up at the pro-editors panel at Pittcon, by the way, and did I ever get scolded as a brash and tactless neo fan for embarrassing the pro-eds in this fashion. Incidentally, there were at least a dozen recruits to N3F resulting from bundles sold through Lowndes publishing my letter. If more publicity had been given, there would have been ever so many more recruits; not only to N3F, but to other segments of fandom as well.

That was my initiation to the intricacies and rivalries of Fandom. The reason the others at the con felt I was brash and tactless was mainly because a large percentage of them were apa\* fans; and apa groups are not looking for new recruits and see no purpose in expanding fandom. They are quite satisfied with the status quo and thus resent anything that might "rock the boat", so to speak.

It's too bad that there is no place where amateur and professional can meet and discuss things like this. It's only too unfortunate that N3F and ISFCC are the only National correspondence clubs who are interested in expanding their membership and developing new and different ideas and programs.

Robert Lowndes recently wrote an excellent article in which he explained just how fandom got started. In the early days it was customary for most of the pro-editors to publish quite a good deal of the letters from their readers. After awhile these editors found that their readers had started writing to each other and thus fandom was started. At the time, the pro-eds supported the idea because these people wrote long letters of comment discussing the contents of the prozines. Modern fandom seldom mentions the prozines anymore and thus the editors lost interest. I wonder if by reviewing the pro-mags and discussing them in our fanzines we could recapture the interest of the pro-eds and thus get some publicity for fan organizations like N3F and her Fanzine Clearing House.

----- Seth A. Johnson



\* apa - Amateur Press Association. Usually a group of stf fen who publish their own magazines on mimeograph or spirit duplicator and mail them to each other. Consist mainly of comments on each others fanzines. Occasionally some ambitious faned will include illustrations and articles by other fen, but most apa groups demand at least six self-written pages per every three months. Some, however, pub twenty to sixty pages. These groups generally limit membership to forty-sixty members and have long waiting lists of newcomers who wish to join. When one of the older members drop out, then someone is accepted from the top of the waiting list for membership. Thus, these people want no recruits or newcomers, but feel that there are too too many on the waiting list now and wish that there were some way to cut down. Quite a few of them do not consider anyone to be a Trufan unless he publishes a fanzine.





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